1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins M 54

called a meeting of his sub-chiefs, and made known to them that he desired a great wolf drive organized for two days hence. Every tribesman with a horse was to join in the hunt, so as to provide a chain of beaters. Sheykh Tai' himself, his lieutenants, and I, armed only with lances, were to ride down the wolves and spear them. This was not the usual method of hunting wolves, but is certainly more romantic and exciting than shooting them with long-range rifles from automobiles.

When Sheykh Tai' asked me if I knew how to handle a *rumh* (the Bedouin lance) I had to own my ignorance; but it was not long before I learnt how to handle it under the tuition of my good friend.

These spears are from fifteen to eighteen feet long. They are of light bamboo, which the Bedouins cut in the swamps of the lower Euphrates. Below the triangular steel head they are decorated with tufts of the black and grey down-feathers of the ostrich, a few fluttering red ribbons, and tinkling coils of very thin silver chains. The butt is sheathed in a painted iron ferrule.

When at the appointed hour beaters and followers had lined up at the *sheykh's* tent, and all was ready, Sheykh Tai' rammed the butt of his lance into the ground and, using it as a vaulting-pole, leaped on his horse's back.

Besides Sheykh Tai' and myself, only the sub-chiefs carried lances. The rest of the men took their rifles with them, but merely to start the game and for defense in case of unexpected meeting with enemies.

Sheykh Tai's nine-year old son, Farhan, with a heavy Mauser pistol in his belt, accompanied us. His short, bare legs clung to the sides of an unsaddled mare, which he

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cleverly guided with his thighs and hands, and by his voice making her walk or gallop. 224 857

An hour before sunrise we rode into the steppe, waking to a glorious morning. I was mounted on a spirited mare, very fast and of great endurance. Over three hundred armed beaters from the widely scattered tents of the Tai' Bedouins had ridden out the previous day to the foothills of the Jabal Sinjar, there to cut off the retreat of the wolves into the northern mountains. Bands of gazelles and many bustards and other fowl fled before us. But we left them untouched, as we were after other game. 224 [136]

Only when the left wing of our riders roused two wolves did we give chase.

Wolves do not break cover and "go away" as foxes do, but there were other things to which one had to give attention in this hunt. Moles and burrowing mice had undermined the ground and more than half of our horses "took a toss" as they stepped into the hidden holes.

We galloped about twelve miles, and four or five wolves had been put up by the beaters. Our horsemen followed them tirelessly. I came so close to one animal that I could almost have touched his fur with my outstretched lance. My horse followed the runaway with the ardour of a bloodhound. I had therefore to give my undivided attention to the dangerous ground and repeatedly turned the mare aside, sometimes in the very nick of time, to prevent her floundering into one of the sandy burrows.

The slender lance rested perfectly balanced in my hand. My wolf slackened speed somewhat and my mare

l: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

512 way, riding monkey-like on the hindquarters of one of the better-
233 conditioned animals, and looking as if every minute he would slide
462 off over the animal's tail. The herdsman's song is wild and weird,
[633] rising and falling in semitones. As often as not he starts off with a description of the beautiful grazing that his charges are going to find ahead of them. He pleads with his camels and says they are to trust him, their guide and helper. He it is who is leading them to pastures fair, and grass that is green and succulent. The camels seem to understand, for with sundry groans and moans, they slowly follow him in single file. As they disappear into the early morning mist, the last you see or hear of the party is the distant singing of the camelherd. Then all are swallowed up in the morning fog. Like the sheep, the camels will not go far. Five to eight miles is their limit just now. Grazing has been so pitifully scarce in their long summer camp they must be allowed to get fit slowly; presently they will go further afield. The camelherd does not sleep by day. His is a much more valuable herd. He watches, with rifle ready, even though there is not the slightest rumour of danger or trouble in the air. To while away the long day, he may look for truffles on the hilltops or occasionally try and catch a jerboa. In the main, however, he watches and watches till the time comes to go home.

512 The camels and sheep having gone out to graze and the sun being
264 up, the tent family will have a meagre breakfast consisting of a little tea without milk, and some dates. If the housewife is in funds she may issue a small ration of bread to all; more often than not they go without.

512 The daughter of the house with her small sister, or her girl friend
462 from the neighbour's tent, now starts off to collect brushwood for
313 the day's needs. '*Arfaj* is what they seek, and as this has a tough root, they arm themselves with a small axe and several yards of goat's hair
[857] rope to carry home the firewood on their heads. Other children of from five to ten years old often accompany the girls to see if they can find an early flower or a truffle. It is their one way of enjoying themselves, they have few other amusements. The girls move off with strong healthy stride, their long sleeves bound behind their necks to free their arms, and their skirts hitched up at the waist to give freedom of movement. How straight and supple they are! Daily this fetching